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AUGUST, 1906

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- III. NATURE in Early English and in Shakspeare: *Beowulf* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- IV. SOME BIRDS of English Poetry: The *Phoenix* of *Cynewulf* and of Shakspeare, and Dunbar's *Twa Douws*.
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CONTENTS FOR AUGUST

| | |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| IN SICILY | By Ludwig Lewisohn |
| NORA HOPPER CHESSON | By Cornelius Weygandt |
| TINTORETTO | By G. B. Rose |
| FROM THE GULISTAN OF SA'DI | By Glen Levin Swiggett |
| WE ONCE BUILT A HOUSE O' DREAMS | By Thomas S. Jones, Jr. |
| TO FUTURE POETS (From Sully Prudhomme) | By Curtis Hidden Page |
| FRAGMENT ON NATURE | By Emerson |

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COLLEGE FRIENDSHIPS



THESE verses were written by President CHARLES CUTHBERT HALL, and read at the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Delta Psi Fraternity at Williams College.

They express the faith, held by many in common with the author, in the continuity beyond the years of the real friendship of souls. The message will be a stimulus and consolation to all to whom it comes.

As a piece of bookmaking, the volume is the best that has come from *The Sewanee Press*. The type used is the beautiful Caslon, and the paper is "Arches" French handmade. It was dampened before printing and the sheets were afterwards smoothed in the dry-press. There is a touch of antique red on the title-page and the colophon is likewise rubricated. Otherwise the volume is without decoration, making its appeal through its dignified simplicity.

The entire edition consists of only 180 copies. Of these, ten copies will be bound in full levant with silk ends, stamped in gold; the remaining 180 copies will be bound in limp leather. The special copies will be sold for \$10 each, and the others at \$2 each.

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THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
OF SEWANEE TENNESSEE

The Pathfinder

Vol. I]

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[No. 2

IN SICILY

By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Since those kind years it is not long,
When for a sweetly laughing day,
I from all care could fly away
Into a land of summer-song;
And lie on lawns more soft than sleep
Beneath some green arbutus tree,
Beside the azure midland deep,
In Sicily, in Sicily!

For there it was where woodlands list,
The resonant woods and echo song,
That I, the flowery meads along,
With Amaryllis kept my tryst.
I gave her dewy apples, gave
Her dewier roses — oh, to be
Forever by the midland wave,
In Sicily, in Sicily!

Sicilian lyrics languorous
She sang me, ditties dreamy-old,
Heard through deep summer noons of gold
By Vergil and Theocritus.
That voice, I may not hear it more;
Those eyes, those lips, I may not see;
Lost unto me that midland shore,
And all my dreams of Sicily.

*NORA HOPPER CHESSON**By CORNELIUS WEYGANDT*

To the many who read of her death on April 17, Nora Hopper Chesson was but a name. To the readers of English and Irish magazines in which, for twelve years, her verses frequently appeared, her memory is likely to be that of a facile verse-maker, who could rhyme pleasantly on any subject. Even to those who care greatly for poetry it is improbable she counted for much, for she wrote in so many manners that she dissipated her very considerable power. Three notes she could and did strike surely, the other-worldly romance of the Celt, the pity of beautiful things vanished with the years, the joy of woman's surrender to love. In the days when the Celtic Renaissance was but begun she made her reputation with "Ballads in Prose" (1894), but for all the beauty of her work whose subject material is Celtic, it seems to me she struck the other notes with more distinction. Very often it was the pity of the beauty of the Greek myth gone with the morning of the world that she chose to celebrate; and it is here, I think, that she completely achieved. The best of her later verse,

however, was on the third note, and had she lived to write better things even than the good things she did, it had been in personal lyrics of the kind of which "Southernwood" is the most distinguished. From fine onset to finer close it is compact of passion transmuted into poetry. I have space to quote only:

So I have harvested my womanhood
Into one tall green bush of Southernwood.
And if the leaves are green about your feet,
And if my fragrance on a day should meet
And brace your weariness, why not in vain
Shall I have husbanded from sun and rain
My spices if you chance to find them sweet.

Since it is a rule of nature, with few exceptions to prove it, that a poet's best work is done before thirty-five, the world could not have looked to Mrs. Chesson for better poetry than she gave, but in recent years she had written stories, and in one of the later of these, "The Bell and the Arrow," there were qualities that presaged real accomplishment in prose fiction.

It is not the critic's function to speak of the personal loss her death has brought to little children and husband and friends, but it is his function, and it is curious, to note how often her thoughts had turned to death and how many

of her lines so inspired are applicable to her own death. "Phæacia," addressed to him who afterwards was her husband, is prophetic in that passage in which she speaks of "The gods who . . . shed swift death upon beloved heads."

Splendidly vital as she was, Nora Hopper Chesson seemed to have more in her, for all her Irish and Welsh ancestry, of glad Greek than of dream-rapt Celt; but had she lived in Ireland, her father's country and always before her inner eye, her Celticism would have had deeper roots. As things were, her knowledge of Ireland was chiefly book-knowledge, though, of course, her father's talk and her own writing, brief as it was, taught her much directly. Only the other day I heard a distinguished exponent of the Gælic Revival dismiss her shortly as a pleasant imitator, now of Mr. Yeats, now of Mrs. Tynan-Hinkson, and now of "Moirá O'Neill." I think him mistaken, holding though I do that other of her verses are better than her verses on things Celtic. It is easy to find likeness between lines of Mrs. Chesson's and lines of these writers, but it should always be remembered that Mr. Yeats and Mrs. Tynan-Hinkson went to the Pre-Raphaelites, as did Mrs. Chesson, and that such likenesses are largely due to the masters the three

had in common. "The King of Ireland's Daughter," with its "gray sails sailing west over gray water," is Pre-Raphaelite in tone but its music is its maker's, as is the music of "April in Ireland," which Mrs. Chesson conceives in "gown of mist and rain drops shot with cloudy blue." "A Connaught Lament" contains this stanza, whose naturalness and beauty and music compel me to quote it:

Because of the words your lips have spoken,
 (O dear black head that I must not follow)
My heart is a grave that is stripped and hollow,
As ice on the water my heart is broken.

The "Ballads in Prose," from which I have been quoting, is a first book, but it contains, I think, with the exception of "Wild Geese," Mrs. Chesson's most original verse inspired by Ireland. In her later Irish verses her obligation to "Moira O'Neill" is often very direct.

More impressive than the lyrics of this first volume, in that they are stronger, are the prose tales that give it title. In many of these is an incessant call of the sea, a call that is symbolized in "The Sorrow of Manannan," a tale told as if it were of old time and perhaps suggested by some one of the many similar myths of the Cel-

tic past. But if it was founded on the old stories of the Sea God, it is the only tale that I can trace to a mythical origin. The rest are her own creations.

It has been a matter of wonder to me that after such success in the short prose tale Mrs. Chesson did not immediately follow this bent. Her later shorter tales of like sort show that she could not regain at will the power that made "Aonan-na-Righ" a tale of old time savagery so stark that you must turn to match it to the sternest of the tales William Sharp told in his role of "Fiona Macleod." Nor have I ever been able to explain to myself why Mrs. Chesson, so successful in the ballad in prose, should succeed so indifferently in the ballad in verse. "The Strangers" has very evident power, but it has not the clearness of outline the ballad must have to hold fast, while its story is told, the attention of the reader; nor do the several other ballads in "Under Quicken Boughs" (1896), or "Songs of the Morning" (1900), attain notability.

It is in "Under Quicken Boughs" you will find her most charming verses of the "Greek convention," though this lovely stanza comes from "Songs of the Morning":

Sad sobs the sea forsaken of Aphrodite;
Hellas and Helen are not, the slow sands fall,
Gods that were gracious and lovely, Gods that were
mighty,
Sky and sea and silence resume them all.

The very thought of Helen is inspiration to her.
Earlier than this stanza is "Helen of Troy,"
which has sung itself into my memory, where it
recurs more often than any poem of hers. Here
it is:

I am that Helen, that very Helen
Of Leda, born in the days of old;
Men's hearts were as inns that I might dwell in:
Houseless I wander to-night, and cold.

Because man loved me, no God takes pity:
My ghost goes wailing where I was Queen!
Alas! my chamber in Troy's tall city,
My golden couches, my hangings green!

Wasted with fire are the halls they built me,
And sown with salt are the streets I trod,
Where flowers they scattered and spices spilt me —
Alas, that Zeus is a jealous god!

Softly I went on my sandals golden;
Of love and pleasure I took my fill;
With Paris' kisses my lids were holden,
Nor guessed I, when life went at my will,
That the Fates behind me went softer still.

"Aquamarines" (1902) reveals still further
Mrs. Chesson's versatility, but no poem of a

new beauty. It brings back again the wish that she had not tried so many kinds of poems—lullabies, love songs, fairy songs, war songs, odes, descriptive verses, lyrical ballads, ballads—and that she had not used so many kinds of material—Celtic, Greek, Scandinavian, Pre-Raphaelite Mediæval, and the flowers and seasons of England. It is her own experience and personality that are really valuable. Some of the above poems and materials are not especially suited to her treatment and she gets from them only the ordinary stock in trade of the minor poet. But final judgment of a poet, fortunately, must be by the best the poet has done, and judgment by her best ranks Nora Hopper Chesson high. - Let him who has not read her get "Ballads in Prose," "Under Quicken Boughs" and "Songs of the Morning," and read "the King of Ireland's Daughter," "April in Ireland," "A Connaught Lament," "The King of Ireland's Son," "Helen of Troy," "Southernwood," and "The Chrysoberyl"—which last I have not dared to praise—and he will have a new delight, the delight of meeting a new personality expressed in a new music of words.

*TINTORETTO**By G. B. ROSE*

To write sanely of Tintoretto is to invite a row. Ruskin felt for him a blind idolatry, and devoted a large part of his matchless prose to the glorification of his works. He exalted him from his secure rank as second in the hierarchy of Venetian painting to a position *facile princeps* in the realm of art. And the worse Tintoretto painted the greater grows Ruskin's enthusiasm. He is like an over-fond mother, who loves best her deformed child. He tries to make us believe that the vast black "Paradise" in the hall of the Great Council at Venice is not only the biggest but the greatest of pictures; that impetuous haste, not "an infinite capacity for taking pains," is a proof of genius; that literary meaning is more to be esteemed than artistic execution. And such is the power of eloquence that he has drawn thousands to his way of thinking, and the *Scuola di san Rocco*, with its great, blackened, faded sketches of pictures, painted at the rate of a yard an hour, are always crowded by reverent disciples, who, Ruskin in hand, patiently study the vast, gloomy compo-

sitions, and by the eye of faith discover in them all manner of perfections which it is not given to the uninitiated to see. I confess that I am one of the uninitiated, and that while I have an immense love for Tintoretto at his best, at his worst he seems to me bad indeed.

Few men have offered such a study in dual personality. There were two Tintoretos, the pagan Tintoretto who loved beauty like a Greek, and lingered over the charms of the human countenance and form, portraying them with infinite patience and unsurpassable skill, and the Christian Tintoretto, who is rarely satisfactory.

When ~~he~~ he undertook to paint a Christian picture, particularly the ones that fill half the churches and monastic establishments of Venice, Tintoretto was usually seized by a frenzy of inspiration. He was no doubt an ardent Christian, and the ambition to represent in a vast, novel and dramatic way the events of the Christian story carried him completely away. He formed immense designs, and dashed them off in a few weeks. Invention is there, but invention alone will not make a great picture. As Demosthenes defined the three essentials of oratory to be "action," "action," "action," so the three first essentials of a work of art are

“execution,” “execution,” “execution;” and Tintoretto’s vast compositions are usually only sketches,—bold, original sketches, but because of their incompleteness not entitled to high rank as artistic achievements. In fact, to be entirely honest, they are about on a level with Doré’s immense canvasses. There is the same striking invention, coupled with the same poverty of execution; only Doré was doing his best and Tintoretto his worst.

There are few, if any, greater masters of beautiful color than Tintoretto; but in these immense compositions of his Christian frenzy, to facilitate the rapidity of execution he mixes his colors with bitumen or an excess of oil, so that they have turned black and have become positively ugly; but the blacker and the uglier they are the wilder becomes the jubilation of the true Tintoretto worshipers and the greater their scorn for the poor commonplace mortals who can only gaze in open-mouthed astonishment at their enthusiasm.

Of course, there are exceptions, pictures like the “Miracle of St. Mark,” where splendor of color and careful execution unite to make a thing of pure beauty; but among his Christian works these are unusual.

When, however, we turn to the pagan Tintoretto we enter a field of pure delight. No one ever loved the beauty of the flesh more than he; few have depicted it with such skill. I do not recall any pagan picture of his that is not a thing of radiant beauty. When he painted those lovely forms he was not carried away by an overmastering inspiration that may rank him high among the prophets and seers, but which was incompatible with finished artistic production; he painted them because he loved them, because he was charmed with the satiny sheen of those beautiful bodies, and he lingered over them with the loving patience of the true artist. While the vast majority of his Christian pictures have grown black with time, these lovely pagan creations, like the "Venus and Vulcan" of the Pitti, the "Luna and the Hours" at Berlin, the "Purification of the Women of Midian" at Madrid, and above all his masterpieces in the Doge's Palace have only grown richer and mellow with the passage of the years. I call the picture at Madrid a pagan work, for though the subject is taken from the Old Testament, it is purely pagan in spirit, and its only purpose is to show the beauty of flesh so fair that purification seems unneeded.

John Addington Symonds, certainly a competent judge, pronounced Tintoretto's "Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne" the most beautiful picture in the world, and I should agree with him did not Giorgione's "Sleeping Venus" still hang in Dresden, and Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love" in the Borghese Villa. Lovely as is Tintoretto's masterpiece, those supreme presentments of a beauty almost divine seem to me fairer still. But to be second only to Titian (for despite Morelli I still believe that Titian painted the "Sleeping Venus" also) should be honor enough for mortal man. In clear, luminous color, in grace and freshness of design, in beauty of form, the "Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne," the "Mercury and the Graces" and the "Minerva Driving Back Mars" are almost unequaled, and make the *Antecollegio* in the Doge's Palace one of Art's supremest shrines. It is these and other works like them, where Tintoretto rejoices in the beauty of the flesh with an exceeding joy such as was known only in Venice in her prime, that gave to Tintoretto an enduring place as one of the great masters of his craft, and entitles him to write his name just below Titian's.

Nor must his achievements as a portrait

painter be overlooked. In this field he did not have quite the assured mastery of Titian, nor that subtle charm that makes some of the portraits of Lorenzo Lotto haunt the chambers of the memory forever; but he seized instantaneously the essential character of his sitter and presented it with realistic power. He is one of the great masters of portraiture; though his achievement in that line has been somewhat obscured by his brilliant successes and his daring attempts in more striking fields.



WE ONCE BUILT A HOUSE O' DREAMS

By THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

We once built a house o' dreams
At the break o' day
Made from out the first gold beams
On the sward astray.

Little did we think or care
'Twas not safe nor strong;
We were very happy there
And the day was long.

Now we leave our house o' dreams,
Why, we do not know,
Only this — so strange it seems
And so hard to go!

*FROM THE GULISTAN OF SA'DI**By THE EDITOR*

In bringing to the attention of our readers some of the delightful things from that quaint, far-away *Rose-Garden* of Shaikh Sa'di, that "grand old man," who never advances a step until he has "tried the ground," I know of no more fitting introduction than the following words from Sir Edwin Arnold's Preface to the *Gulistan*: "Of late," he says, "when I have wished—in my study and among my books—to take refuge from politics and bodily pain, and that ocean of careless and worthless written work upon which float the scattered islands that are fair and good in current literature, I have betaken myself to good old Sa'di, and especially to his *Gulistan*. The Shaikh was really the Horace and Marco Polo of the Far East combined into one rich and gracious nature. Ancient enough to carry with him a fine flavor of the Old World, he is as modern and as much for all times as the Roman poet himself or American Emerson."

Whether in some vague way that mysterious sap which permeates all nations at sometime

and makes all civilization akin, passed through Persia with the advent of Sa'di or his splendid utterance has had a subtle influence upon western thought through Arabic culture at different times, the fact remains that the beautiful flowers of that magnificent mind will be a source of perennial charm —

“Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold.”

With the eager curiosity of a genial temperament and the quiet meditation of a reflective race, this oriental gardener of the mind's fairest flowers, after his *Wanderjahre* spent in search of those blooms that he afterwards transplanted and carefully nurtured outside the walls of his native city, Shirâz, returned to the “protecting shadow of the Sultan Abukar,—to his lovely retreat benéath the cypresses and rose-bushes” where “full of garnered wisdom and astounding observation of men and things” he wrote, in 1263, in the ripeness of his years, the full three score and ten, the *Gulistan*, from which I quote, with acknowledgment to the Harper edition of 1899, as follows :

“Worth not by wealth, but merit, guage ;
And wits by wise words, not by age.”

—
“Whoso with help in storm would meet
Must bear himself in sunshine sweet;
The slave, his ring fixed in his ear,
Flees frightened, if ye make him fear;
Be gentle, generous; and so make
Strangers your slaves for kindness' sake.”

“In office waste not, if thou will be free,
At quitting, from the stings of calumny:
Be just, then have no fear of anyone,—
'Tis the foul cloth the fuller bangs on stone.”

“The lion a hound's leavings will not eat
Though in his den he die for lack of meat.”

“Either fidelity's no more afoot,
Or none doth practice it on earth below:
I never taught a young hand how to shoot,
But, in the end, at me he drew his bow.”

“While thou dost cleave to house and ship
thou art but half a man:
Go, see the great world for thyself,
whilst Destiny cries ‘can.’”

“Give not thy heart to chill despair
when evil times begin;
Strip rather from thy foe their coats,
and from thy friend his skin.”

“Be yourself good, and let the bad ones rave!
They hold no power to harm save what ye gave.
If that the strings be all in tune, the lyre
No meddling minstrel's finger will require.”

“ Wise men who seek a happier life to own
Go to a country where they are not known.”

“ Not all he knoweth will the wise man say ;
He stakes his neck who with the King doth play.”

“ Ill fall the friends who let my failings go
For merits, silent of those faults they know ;
Who suffer me to think my thorns are roses,
And breath, such as the jasmine bud discloses ;
Give me instead that sharp-eyed enemy
Who sees me as I am, and makes me see ! ”

“ He who recounts to thee faults of thy brothers
Hastens to tell thy faults, too, to the others.”

“ Keep high and safe the state of self-command
And leave their follies to the courtly band.”

“ When, by the will of God, a man doth fall,
The world treads on his head — yea, one and all ;
But when they see Luck take him by the hand,
With palms on breast round him the flatterers stand.”

“ Peace with an enemy if you desire,
Praise him the more he blames: let him be bitter ;
At last in malice even the worst must tire.
Make your mouth sweet, and his will not be bitter.”

“ Food is for life, and therewith praise to Heaven ;
Life's not for food, nor mouth for guzzling given.”

TO FUTURE POETS

(From Sully Prudhomme)

By CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE

Poets to come, you shall know many things,
And you shall speak more nobly than we might,
Beaconing farther your more searching light
O'er man's last destinies and earliest springs.

Your song shall hallow grand imaginings
When we are shrouded in oblivious night,
Our work long since devoured by Time's fell spite,
Our songs entombèd with the lip that sings.

And yet forget not quite — of loves and flowers
We sang mid clash of arms, through darkened hours,
To anxious hearts and ears made deaf with noise.

Pity our songs, that trembled with our fears,
The while you sing, in days fulfilled of joys,
Clear songs on higher themes, unmarred by tears.

*FRAGMENT ON NATURE*

By EMERSON

Teach me your mood, O patient stars!
Who climb each night the ancient sky,
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,
No trace of age, no fear to die.

About Our Contributors

Ludwig Lewisohn resides in Charleston, S. C. Since leaving Columbia University he has devoted himself to literature, contributing to several magazines.

Cornelius Weygandt is assistant professor of English in the University of Pennsylvania, from which he was graduated in 1891. His critical studies in nineteenth century literature, particularly the so-called Celtic Renaissance, have been well received.

George B. Rose, attorney, resides in Little Rock, Ark. He has devoted many years to the study of Renaissance art and is the author of several books in this field.

Thomas S. Jones, Jr., is on the dramatic staff of the "New York Times." Since his graduation from Cornell University in 1904 he has published a volume of verse, "The Path o' Dreams," and contributed frequently to the magazines.

Glen Levin Swiggett: *vide* THE PATHFINDER, Vol. I, No. 1.

Curtis Hidden Page is adjunct professor of Romance languages and literature at Columbia University. He has studied at Harvard and abroad. He is author of "Songs and Sonnets of Pierre de Ronsard," is associated editorially with several publications, and is a frequent contributor to our leading magazines.

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